

ACE Employee Newsletter

For Amarillo City Employees

Volume 4, Issue 4 • April 2014



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AECC Celebrates Telecommunicators Week

by Sonja Gross, Community Relations Coordinator

The Amarillo Emergency Communication Center (AECC) celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunications Week (NPSTW) earlier this month, which included an awards ceremony April 16. This banquet honored the men and women who answer emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals (Police, Fire, EMS, and Animal Control), and render life-saving assistance to the citizens of Amarillo.

Among the award winners were: Leigh Ann Bluntzer, Public Educator of the Year; Tammy Carter, Silent Hero; Tiffany Shepherd, Trainer of the Year; Crystal Salazar, Telecommunicator of the Year; Lou Ann Humphrey, Supervisor of the Year; Judith Weshinskey-Price, Manager of the

Year; Chris Pacino, Most Overtime for the Year; Ben Hall, Perfect Attendance; Robin Malatesta, Highest Percentage of 100s on QA (Quality Assurance); Tiffany Shepherd, Highest QA Score; Tiffany Shepherd, Highest Call Take Average; and Erin Young and Robin Malatesta, Stork Award.

A Team Award was also presented to Alex Berry, Jacob Brewer, Tammy Carter, Corene Churchwell, Logan Hammons, Zach Hendrix, Carlos Hood, Lou Ann Humphrey, Monica McNutt, Lindzee Roten and Aty Thongboutsady for their response to a call of a small plane that had disappeared from radar November 11, 2013. The plane was later discovered crashed in a small field

just outside of Amarillo, and three souls were lost.

Theresa High, Mindy Cook and Judith Weshinskey-Price were also recognized for earning their Master Telecommunicator certification while Mindy Cook completed her Registered Public Safety Leader certification and Terry Bavousett completed his Emergency Number Professional certification.

AECC answers all 911 calls originating inside the city. In 2013, there were 545,415 calls answered. This night was about celebrating all of those people who work behind the scenes helping the citizens and ensuring the safety of our first responders. They are all truly SILENT HEROS!

Take Time to Prepare for Severe Weather

by Kevin Starbuck, Emergency Management Coordinator

Mid-April to mid-June is the primary severe weather season for the Texas Panhandle. While thunderstorms can bring much needed moisture to our region, they can also bring heavy rains, damaging hail, deadly lightning, high winds and the potential for destructive tornadoes. Preparedness is the key to ensuring you are ready for severe weather season.

Make a Plan: Take time to think through how you will respond to a severe weather threat. You should avoid going outside when severe thunderstorms threaten because of the many hazards associated with these powerful storms. To prepare for the threat of a tornado, identify a location where you and your family will take shelter when a warning is issued. Storm shelters or basements are the best locations, but if you don't have access to these, a small interior room without windows on the lowest floor is your best alternative. Manufactured homes and vehicles are not safe locations and you need to have another location identified. If you have to take shelter, covering yourself with pillows, blankets and even wearing a helmet increases your protection should your location be impacted. Plan ahead not just at home, but also at work, school, church and any location that you frequent so you will be prepared to take action.

Build a Kit: National guidelines recommend individuals and families have a 72 hour supply of food, water, medications and other emergency supplies as a baseline for a disaster supply kit. Your disaster kit should also include other items, such as important documents, prescriptions, medical supplies and a first aid kit.

Stay Informed: One of the most important things you can do is stay informed of potential or ongoing emergency situations. One of the best tools available is the NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio system operated by the National Weather Service in conjunction with local emergency management. In the event of a Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Warning, the NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio system is activated on a county level to alert you and your family to the weather situation. In addition, local television and radio, outdoor warning sirens, smart-phone applications, Suddenlink cable cut-in system and other systems are available to alert you to severe weather. Having multiple means to receive warnings of an emergency will ensure that you have as much advanced notice as possible. Always remember, when a warning is issued, take action immediately to protect yourself and your family.

Preparedness is the key to communities successfully weathering a disaster. Individuals and families that make a plan, build a kit, and stay informed will be prepared and minimize the impacts of potential disaster situations. Additional preparedness information can be found at:

<http://oem.amarillo.gov>

or through FEMA at:

<http://www.ready.gov>



Photo courtesy of Michael Schumacher / Amarillo Globe-News



Amarillo Regional Pre-Retirement Seminar

When: Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Where: Amarillo Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St., Heritage Room

Who: City employees approaching retirement eligibility or currently eligible to retire.

Contact Human Resources at 378-4294 if you would like to attend.

AGENDA

Time

8:30 – 9:00
9:00 – 9:15
9:15 – 10:30
10:30 – 10:45
10:45 – 11:45
11:45 – 12:00

Topic

Registration & Continental Breakfast
Welcome
Stepping into Retirement (TMRS)
Break
Social Security (Social Security Representative)
Review / Q&A

City's Tuition Assistance Program Helps Employees Reach Goals

by Chera Miller, Community Relations

Andrea McDonald, finance administrative technician for the City of Amarillo, began attending classes at Wayland Baptist University during the fall 2013 semester in her quest for a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

"I feel that in today's work environment, it is absolutely essential to have a college degree," she says. "It serves as the gateway to better options and more opportunity."

Yet, it was only recently that attending college even became a possibility for McDonald.

"The City's tuition program is assisting me with my goal of achieving a college degree that otherwise would not have been an option," she confesses.

McDonald isn't alone. Richard De La Cruz, an IT analyst for the City, is also taking advantage of the program as he pursues a Web Developer Specialist Certificate at Amarillo College. In May 2014, he will finally be able to support his years of experience as a web developer with a certificate from an accredited school. He hails what the program has given him as an "opportunity."

McDonald and De La Cruz are just

two of many employees taking advantage of the Tuition Assistance Program offered by the City of Amarillo.

"One of the great things about the program is that it is not a tuition reimbursement program," says De La Cruz. "The City pays for the classes up front, and as long as you receive a passing grade and stay employed with the City for a year from the beginning of the class, you do not have to come up with any of the money for the classes taken."

Both agree that application to the program is easy.

"I talked to my supervisors about my interest in taking classes, and they gave me the paperwork needed to get started," says De La Cruz.

McDonald adds, "There's only one form to complete ... once you've received your approved form back from Payroll, you take that form to your institution and enroll."

If you would like more information about the City's Tuition Assistance Program, please visit with your supervisor or contact Jana McCarley in Human Resources at jana.mccarley@amarillo.gov or at 378-6011. It's never too late to go to college, and the City wants to help employees



Andrea McDonald



Richard De La Cruz

reach their goals. Everyone involved in the program benefits from it.

"I feel truly blessed that the City of Amarillo has given me the opportunity to attend college and work towards a degree that I have always desired," McDonald says. "The feeling of accomplishment that I get with each passing course is unsurpassable."

National Certification Achieved



Animal Control Officers and members of the Humane Society were recently certified as National Animal Cruelty Investigators. We are so honored to have that level of staff training in Amarillo!

Saturday Hours

**Amarillo Animal Control Shelter
and
Amarillo-Panhandle Humane Society
will be open on Saturdays
beginning April 5, 2014**

11:00 a.m.-5:00 pm.



Warrant Roundup Huge Success!

The Amarillo Police Department and City of Amarillo Municipal Court partnered earlier this year for the Texas State Warrant Roundup. People with outstanding Amarillo Municipal Court warrants received warrant notice postcards in the mail, encouraging them to contact the court and clear up the warrants before APD officers began serving the warrants.

After the notices went out, APD assigned officers to find the people with outstanding warrants. Uniformed officers located people at their homes, places of employment or wherever they could.

As a result of the Municipal Court and APD efforts, 4,678 warrants were cleared and \$1,510,351.93 was collected. Last year, 4,416 warrants were cleared during Warrant Roundup.



Kudos to everyone at Municipal Court and the Amarillo Police Department on a job well done!

SAFETY CORNER: Don't be a Fool When it Comes to Safety

by Charlie Sanchez, Safety Manager

Not long ago, it was April 1st. Ah yes, the ol' April Fools' jokes ...

"All departments will get a half day off today" – April Fools'!

"Did you hear about that newest employee? Come to find out, he's the Governor's son sent to check things out here at the job site." "Wow! Really?" – April Fools'!

"Did you hear about that big hole they dug at the park?" "No." "Well, it's going to be a new swimming pool with a sandy beach." "Awesome! How will that work, anyway?" – April Fools'!"

While all of us might like to pull a prank on a friend or a co-worker, practical jokes and horseplay really have no room in the workplace. What may seem as harmless fun could, in fact, lead to a serious injury or the worse case scenario, a fatality.

Throughout the years, yours truly has seen a few April Fools' jokes. A couple of those incidents are very fresh in my memory bank. One that comes to mind involved Safety Hard Hats. It seems a co-worker thought it would be funny to apply a product called Fel-Pro, used as an anti-seize lubricant for high temperature applications, to a sweatband of the suspension harness of a Safety Hard Hat. This petroleum-based product, which has ingredients used to retard extremely high temperatures, can also cause skin irritations. When a rash developed around the forehead and into the scalp, the practical joke was not as funny.

In another incident, a dead bull snake was placed in an elevator car, coiled to look alive. An employee who was very much afraid of snakes was scared half to death when he innocently entered the elevator.

This is a time when kidding and pranks can be taken to a whole new level. However, in terms of safety, caution in what you do is the better alternative as demonstrated in this article from MSNBC:

Fayette County, PA. State police have filed charges after a fatal traffic accident in North Union Township, Fayette County. A vehicle turned over at about 6 a.m. Tuesday on Jumonville Road. Police said one of the passengers pulled up on the emergency brake during the ride, causing the driver to lose control and crash into an embankment, flipping the vehicle and ejecting the passenger. According to police, the driver and the occupant had been friends for more than 20 years.

According to one of the occupants, it was common for the passenger and the driver to joke with one another, which included pulling the emergency brake while the other was driving. Police charged the passenger with involuntary manslaughter and recklessly endangering another person.

You never know when an innocent, fun-intended prank could backfire on you, causing injury or even death.

"TAKE SAFETY HOME!"



City Employee Keeps Hot Water Flowing, Saves Lives

by Chera Miller, Community Relations

On Saturday, April 12, a City building inspector arrived at a home in northwest Amarillo to perform a routine inspection. While examining the roof, he realized that there was a big problem: the exhaust pipe from the water heater stopped in the attic, instead of going through the roof to vent outside. This meant that anyone inside the house risked exposure to toxic fumes, enough of which could cause illness and even death.

The building inspector texted a photograph of the problem to his supervisor for verification. Upon seeing the photo, his supervisor contacted Chief Plumbing Inspector Rich Anderson, who drove to the house immediately, even though he had the weekend off, to see the problem for himself.

Standard procedure would have been to turn off the appliance until the resident could have it repaired. However, the resident of the house, an elderly woman on a fixed income, would have had a difficult time doing so. The thing that was most upsetting to her was that she wouldn't have the hot water she needed to shower before church the next day if City inspectors turned off the water heater.

Anderson, who had worked as a plumber before joining the City, still knew many plumbers-by-trade. He called Jay Jefferson with Unique Plumbing in Amarillo, explained the situation and requested his help. When Jefferson arrived, he realized that the house was the one that he had grown up in. Jefferson kindly donated labor and Anderson paid for parts himself. Between the two men, the woman's water heater was repaired within an hour without putting any financial burden on her. The old house of Jefferson's childhood became livable once again.

Even though City employee Anderson and plumber Jefferson had no obligation to do so, they took time away from their own weekend plans and used their own resources to help a stranger, making it possible for her to get to church on Sunday and possibly even saving her life. Such selflessness deserves to be commended.



From the Pantry ...



Prepared by Margaret Payton, MBA, RD

Pasta with Eggplant, Pine Nuts and Romano

- 1 (8.8 ounce) package uncooked pappardelle (wide ribbon pasta)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 5 large garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 pound eggplant, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped fresh oregano
- 1 (10-ounce) container grape tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 ounces fresh pecorino Romano cheese, shaved (about ½ cup)
- ⅓ cup pine nuts, toasted
- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1. Preheat broiler to high.
2. Cook pasta according to directions; omit salt and fat. Drain in a colander over a bowl, reserving ½ cup liquid.
3. Combine 1 tablespoon oil, garlic, eggplant, oregano, and tomatoes on a jelly-roll pan; toss. Broil 8 minutes or until tomatoes begin to soften.
4. Combine reserved cooking liquid, 2 tablespoons oil, salt and peppers in a bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add pasta and eggplant mixture; toss. Sprinkle with cheese, pine nuts, and parsley.

Serves 6 (serving size: 1½ cups)

Calories 335; Fat 15.8g (sat 39g, mono 6.4g, poly 3.4g); Protein 10.7g; Carb 402g; Fiber 5.4g; Chol 10 mg; Iron 2.4mg; Sodium 391mg; I 118mg

Promotions/Transfers for March 2014

OLD			NEW	
Name	Title	Department	Title	Department
Carl Jones	Utility Maint. Mech.	Surface Water Treatment	Building Mech. III	Facilities
Kallie Powers	Adm. Asst.-hrly	Municipal Court	Adm. Asst. II	Municipal Court
Andrew Martinez	Utility Worker	Wastewater Collection	Instrument Op.	Engineering
Lewis Tanner	Utility Worker	Water Distribution	Equipment Op. I	Street
Sammy Valadez	Utility Worker	Street	Equipment Op. I	Street
James Gamblin	Utility Worker-hrly	Solid Waste Disposal	Utility Worker	Solid Waste Collection
Thomas Taylor	Gate Attendant 1	Solid Waste Disposal	Environ. Compliance Tech	Solid Waste Disposal
Jerold Stewart	Crew Leader-hrly	Park Maintenance	Park Technician II	Park Maintenance
David Garcia	Firefighter	Fire	Fire Driver	Fire
Kyle Joy	Fire Driver	Fire	Fire Lieutenant	Fire
Matthew Bufford	Adm. Asst.-hrly	Building Safety	Adm. Asst.-hrly	Community Development
Tim Claytor	Electronic & Inst. Tech	Water Production	Asst. Water Production Supt.	Surface Water Treatment
Doug Field	Treatment Plant Op. 1	River Road WWT Plant	Treatment Plant Op. 1	Surface Water Treatment
Kenneth Twilla	Crew Leader-hrly	Park Maintenance	Utility Maint. Mech.	Surface Water Treatment
Stanton Coldiron	Utility Op.	Water Distribution	Utility Technician	Water Distribution
Jimmy Finley	Treatment Plant Op.-hrly	Hollywood Road WWT Plant	Treatment Plant Op. 1	Hollywood Road WWT Plant
Francis Living	Utility Maint. Mech.	Hollywood Road WWT Plant	Equipment Op. II	Hollywood Road WWT Plant
Brandon Campsey	IT Technician	IT	IT Analyst	IT
Brandon Coleman	Senior IT Analyst	IT	IT Coordinator	IT

Employee Milestones

Name	Department	Title	Years
Royce Campbell	Civilian Personnel	Administrative Assistant I	5
Daniel Chavez	Custodial Services	Custodian I	5
William L. Daniels	Custodial Services	Custodian I	5
Terry Dickson	Civilian Personnel	Administrative Assistant II	5
Kevin L. Moon	Animal Control	Animal Control Officer III	5
Frances J. Robbins	Transit Fixed Route	Bus Driver	5
Kenneth Wagner	Building Safety	Plumbing Inspector I	5
Robert B. Archer	Fire Operations	Fire Fighter	10
Floyd J. Hartman	Director of Utilities	Assistant Dir. of Utilities	10
Kyle Aaron Joy	Fire Operations	Fire Lieutenant	10
Jason M. Love	Fire Operations	Fire Fighter	10
Cody James Snyder	Fire Operations	Fire Lieutenant	10
Billy G. Williams	Park Maintenance	Park Foreperson I	15
Gloria A. Carlile	Purchasing	Buyer III	20
Cody Lee Moore	Fire Operations	Fire Driver	20
Tammy T. Kelley	Civilian Personnel	Civilian Investigator	30
Brent M. Barbee	Police	Sergeant	35
Michael D. Coleman	Police	Sergeant	35
Terry J. Lichtie	Police	Lieutenant	35

Smile of the Month!



Are You Smiling? Share It!

BUILDING SAFETY:
Maximizing Resilience, Minimizing Risks



Welcome to the COA Team!

Na	Title	Department
Stephen Detten III	Communications Tech.	Communications
Shelly Buckaloo	Building Attendant 1	Civic Center
Oscar Martinez	Building Attendant 1	Civic Center
Cipriano Ulibarri	Building Attendant 1	Civic Center
Elizabeth Clark	Custodian 1	Facilities
Jackie Byrum	Building Mechanic II	Facilities
Todd Stavenhagen	Asst Facilities Manager	Facilities
Brittany Paulson	Admin Assistant-hrly	Library
Penpan Rasavong	Admin Assistant-hrly	Library
Michael Mendoza	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Kelly Swinney	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Brittany Perez	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Vicky Marshall	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Becky Shaw	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Debra Menefee	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Jessica High	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Robin Sanders	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Donna Gonzales	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Larissa McClellan	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Tabitha Norvell	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Misty Brown	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Jennifer Hollingshead	Emergency Comm. Spec.-hrly	AECC
Travis Burton	Utility Worker	Street
Jason Ritchie	Utility Worker	Street
Pete Castaneda	Utility Worker	Street
Christopher Sierra	Utility Worker	Street
Jamon Friar	Utility Worker	Solid Waste Collection
Phillip Dedman	Residential Equip. Operator	Solid Waste Collection
Faustino Terrazas	School Crossing Guard	Traffic Administration
Brittany Bowling	Sanitarian 1	Environmental Health
Lillie Lemley	Admin Assistant V	Transit
Michael McPherson	Bus Driver	Transit
Robert Phipps	Golf Equipment Mechanic I	Comanche Trail Golf Course
Elsa Jimenez	Event Coordinator-hrly	Parks & Recreation
William Manning	Utility Worker-hrly	Park Maintenance
Jerold Stewart	Crew Leader-hrly	Park Maintenance
Benjamin Close	Park Technician 1	Park Maintenance
Jared Tuma	Park Technician 1	Park Maintenance
Free Hawkins	Gate Attendant/Admissions-hrly	Zoo
Kathie Brown	Admin Assistant IV	Community Development
David Saavedra	Admin Assistant I	Public Health
Le Phuong	Registered Nurse	Public Health
Ingrid Briles	Admin Assistant II	Utility Billing
Keith Freeman	Utility Worker	Water Distribution
Jaman Williams	Utility Worker	Water Distribution
Willie McKinnon	Utility Worker	Wastewater Collection
Jordan Melendez	Utility Worker	Wastewater Collection
Juan Portillo	Utility Worker	Wastewater Collection
Sandra Tarango	Custodian 1	Dept of Aviation
Juan Carrasco	Custodian 1	Dept of Aviation
Arthur Cordova II	Custodian 1	Dept of Aviation
David Gragg	Mechanic Apprentice	Municipal Garage

Congratulations March Retirees!

Hugh "Lyn" Holland
Surface Water Treatment
19 years

Alvie "Earl" Brown
Engineering
12 years

Dan Morgan
River Road Water Treatment Plant
12 years

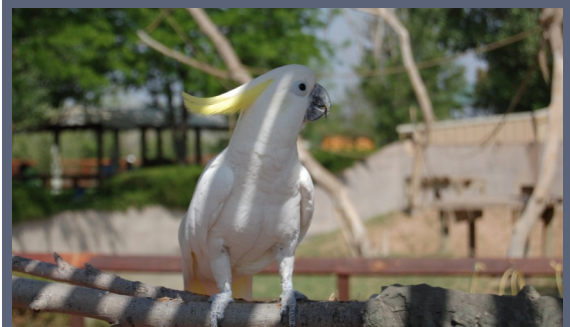
SAVE THE DATE!!!



Employee Appreciation Sausage Celebration Cookout

Thursday, May 29
11 a.m.—2 p.m.
Thompson Park

FREE ZOO ADMISSION!



CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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PUBLICATION POLICY:

The *ACE* employee newsletter is distributed by the City Secretary's office monthly through e-mail, print copies and the City's Intranet site. It is designed to help keep you informed of events and accomplishments throughout the organization you serve. If you have ideas for future stories, features or photo opportunities, or to receive this newsletter electronically, contact:

newsletter@amarillo.gov
378-3549

Items must be received no later than the first Friday of each month to make that month's edition.

All items are subject to space availability and edited for appropriateness.

CITY OF AMARILLO

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Did you know that the City of Amarillo is on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube?



Follow us! Following people on social media is fun and not at all creepy like in real life. Please invite your friends and family to follow us, too. We post events, updates, and accolades related to our fine City and its departments.

More importantly, we need material to post! What's going on in your department? Any promotions or certifications? Got great pictures to share with our citizens? Share them with us, and we'll share 'em with the world. Send items of interest to Sonja Gross in Community Relations at sonja.gross@amarillo.gov. And don't forget to "Like" and "Follow" us. We hope fellow City employees are some of our biggest fans, because we're some of theirs!